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Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAMPAGE 01
ACTION APA-15

BUENOS 02472 01 OF 02 211905Z

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 10-14 ADS-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 INR-10
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AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
USUN NEW YORK 1092
AMEMBASSY ROME
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SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2472

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DEPT PLS INCLUDE AMB GERARD C. SMITH ON DISTRIBUTION

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/21/80 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJECT: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - MARCH 15-21, 1980

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2260

1. SUMMARY: ARREST OF SEVERAL "MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO" FOR DEMONSTRATING ON THE PLAZA AFTERNOON MARCH 20, AND GROWING CONCERNS FOR SEVERAL AUGUST DISAPPEARANCES WHO FOR A TIME WERE IN TOUCH WITH THEIR FAMILIES ARE THIS WEEK'S PRINCIPAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS. END SUMMARY.

2. MOTHERS ARRESTED: TWENTY PERSONS WERE ARRESTED ON MARCH 20 DURING A DEMONSTRATION HELD BY THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO. THE DEMONSTRATION, IN WHICH APPROXIMATELY 300 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED, IS THE FIRST MAJOR ONE TO BE HELD BY THE MOTHERS THIS YEAR. THE POLICE BEGAN DISPERSING THE CROWD SHORTLY AFTER THE DEMONSTRATION BEGAN (5:00 PM). A POLICE SOURCE, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, STATED THAT ARRESTEES WOULD BE RELEASED FOLLOWING IDENTIFICATION, BUT AS THIS CALBE IS SENT THE ARRESTEES ARE STILL IN CUSTODY. HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS HAVE BEEN TOLD THE GROUP WILL REMAIN IN CUSTODY FOR AT LEAST 48 HOURS EXCEPT FOR THE FOUR PEOPLE WHO PRESENTED A PETITION WITHIN THE CASA ROSADA, FOR WHOM THERE MAY BE SPECIAL CHARGES.

3. PAMELA WHEATON, AN AMERICAN CITIZEN JOURNALIST, "ASSISTED" IN HER OWN ARREST WHEN IN AN EFFORT TO ASCERTAIN INFORMATION ON THE EVENTS TAKING PLACE AT THE PLAZA SHE APPROACHED THE CHIEF OF THE OPERATION, WHO IN TURN ASKED HER TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO HIS HEADQUARTERS WHERE THEY WOULD HAVE A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO TALK. UPON THEIR ARRIVAL POLICE OFFICERS SEEN WHEATON WITH THE CHIEF THOUGHT SHE WAS INVOLVED IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND ARRESTED HER. SHE WAS LATER FINGERPRINTED AND FILM WITH WHICH SHE HAS PHOTOGRAPHED THE DEMONSTRATION WAS EXPOSED. WHEATON WORKS WITH THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD.

4. (U) IN ITS EDITORIAL OF MARCH 21 THE HERALD CONCEDED THE GOVERNMENT'S RIGHT UNDER STATE OF SIEGE RULES TO DISPERSE DEMONSTRATORS, BUT URGED THAT GOVERN-

5. COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED: OVER THE PAST SEVERAL

YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT REPORTS OF A PHENOMENON WE TERM THE "COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED": INDIVIDUALS WHO AFTER HAVING DISAPPEARED SUDDENLY WERE ALLOWED TO PHONE, OR EVEN VISIT THEIR FAMILIES. USUALLY, THE FAMILIES OF THE COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED REMAINED SILENT, ON THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THOSE HOLDING THEIR RELATIVES. WE KNOW OF ONE EARLIER CASE WHEN THE COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED SUDDENLY STOPPED VISITING THEIR FAMILIES. WE SURMISE THAT IN THIS CASE THE TWO PEOPLE INVOLVED WERE PROBABLY KILLED BY THEIR CAPTORS. INDEED, IN A RECENT REPORT PUBLISHED BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND WRITTEN BY TWO FORMER DISAPPEARED, THERE IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE "COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED" PHENOMENON WHICH THE AUTHORS STATE USUALLY ENDED IN THE EXECUTION OF THE PRISONERS. ACCORDING TO THESE ALLEGATIONS, THE SECURITY FORCES ALLOWED PRISONERS TO VISIT OR CONTACT THEIR FAMILIES AS REWARD FOR THEIR COOPERATION AND THEN SUMMARILY EXECUTED THEM WHEN THEIR UTILITY ENDED.

6. THE SUBJECT OF COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED IS AGAIN TOPICAL. SIX PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED IN AUGUST SUDDENLY BEGAN TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR FAMILIES LATE LAST DECEMBER AND CONTINUED TO DO SO THROUGH JANUARY. THEN, SIMULTANEOUSLY, ONE BY ONE THEY ENDED THEIR CONTACT DURING

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONTACTS WITH THE FAMILY AND THEIR SUDDEN TERMINATION--AS WELL AS THE AMBASSADOR'S EFFORTS TO INVESTIGATE THESE CASES--HAD BEEN RATHER CLOSELY HELD. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOW LEARNED THAT OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN BUENOS AIRES ARE AWARE OF THESE RECENT EVENTS. MOREOVER, AT LEAST ONE FAMILY IS NOW IN CONTACT WITH GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE.

7. A PROPOSAL ON THE DISAPPEARED: WE HAVE BEEN RELIABLY AND COINCIDENTALLY TOLD THAT IN RECENT MONTHS THE CHURCH AND THE NUNCIATURE HAVE OFFERED PRESIDENT VIDELA THEIR GOOD OFFICES IN DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF THE DISAPPEARED. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE OFFER WAS THAT THE CHURCH WOULD UNDERTAKE TO BE THE INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FAMILIES OF THE DISAPPEARED. THE GOVERNMENT, ACCORDING TO THESE SUGGESTIONS, WOULD SUPPLY THE CHURCH WITH A LIST OF THE DISAPPEARED WHO ACTUALLY ARE DEAD AND THE CHURCH WOULD PASS THE INFORMATION ON TO THE FAMILIES. THIS PROCEDURE, IN THEORY AT LEAST, WOULD END THE ANGUISH OF THE FAMILIES AND AT THE SAME TIME MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ESCAPE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXPLAINING EXACTLY HOW AND WHERE THE INDIVIDUALS DIED. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, PRESIDENT VIDELA LISTENED TO THE PROPOSAL WITH INTEREST AND PROMISED TO CONSULT MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA ABOUT IT.

8. (U) MORE SENTENCES HANDED DOWN: THE COURTS CONTINUED TO HAND DOWN SENTENCES IN CASES CONCERNING THE NATIONAL SECURITY LAWS. TWO PROFESSORS WERE CONDEMNED TO THREE YEARS OF PRISON FOR AN INCIDENT WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DEL SUR IN 1975. THE TWO WERE CHARGED WITH IMPEDING THE LIBERTY OF OTHERS WHEN THEY WOULD NOT PERMIT OTHER PROFESSORS TO LEAVE THE UNIVERSITY FOR SEVERAL HOURS IN MARCH 1975. FEDERAL JUDGES IN ROSARIO, LA PLATA, AND SANTA FE, HANDED DOWN SENTENCES RANGING FROM 4 TO 8 YEARS TO PERSONS HELD FOR ACTS OF SUBVERSION AND TERRORISM.
CASTRO

SUMMARY
EXECUTIONS?Choice offer
to mediate in
account for the
live persons3-year sentences
for appealing
injunction for
a few persons!

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